



NEWS RELEASE

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District: 8- INLAND EMPIRE
Contact: Terri Kasinga
Phone: (909) 383-1910 (work)
(951) 232-4268 (cell)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CALTRANS IS LOOKING FOR VOLUNTEERS TO HELP FIGHT LITTER!

Inland Empire – The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) is asking you to help keep California clean and beautiful. The celebration of Earth Day is also the week that Caltrans high lights the “Don’t Trash California” campaign. The biggest way you can help is to keep your litter inside your vehicle, don’t throw out cigarette butts, and keep your loads tied down on you vehicle while driving.

One way that Caltrans fights litter is through the use of the Adopt-A-Highway Program. It was established in 1989 and California was the 20th state in the nation to put it to task. Over 7,700 shoulder miles of California state highways are currently adopted.

The Adopt-A-Highway Program provides an avenue for individuals, organizations, local agencies, and businesses to make a difference in their community by maintaining up to two-mile sections of roadside within California’s State Highway System. In return, they get a freeway sign recognizing their contribution. This builds community pride in addition to the aesthetic benefits of cleaner and more beautiful roadsides. By doing so, all participants help to prevent potential pollutants from entering our waterways and save taxpayers millions of dollars every year.

Adoption opportunities include litter removal, graffiti removal, vegetation control, tree planting, and wildflower planting. Once the adoptee joins the program, a courtesy sign is erected to recognize participants for their contributions within the area they adopt. There are over 2,500 active groups representing over 11,000 participants statewide. 70% of the groups perform the work themselves and the other 30% hire a contractor to perform the work on their behalf. Caltrans District 8 is the largest district in the state and encompasses all of San Bernardino and Riverside Counties. District 8 spent \$1.5 million last fiscal year to clean up litter and \$1.45 so far this fiscal year. Statewide the Department spent \$16.6 million last fiscal year and \$12.3 so far this fiscal year with costs continuing to mount.

Caltrans District Director Dr. Raymond Wolfe states, “The Adopt-A-Highway (AAH) program is a critical component of our Maintenance program. Through the actions of the AAH volunteers, the department is able to redirect much needed resources to provide the safest transportation system in the nation for users and workers. Additionally, the litter and debris removal efforts furnished by the volunteers provide for more attractive transportation corridors and gateways to the various adjacent communities”.

There are over 7,200 lane miles and of that, over 600 shoulder miles are adopted by more than 300 sponsors. Six hundred shoulder miles of state highway remain available for adoption in the Inland Empire. Not only does the program provide a great avenue to keep the gateways to your communities aesthetically pleasing, it gives both volunteers and sponsors a chance to promote civic duty and community pride.

Littering is a crime and a hazard to motorists. The cost to keep the freeways’ clean could be spent on more important things such as new pavement, pothole repairs, and landscape improvements. Caltrans reminds parents to set a good example for your children and stash their trash. Let’s make a difference and show you care. Don’t Trash California!

For more information and to see how you can join, go to <http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/maint/adopt/>.

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